

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12-15, 17 and 18 have been amended. Thus, claims 1-18 remain pending in the present application.

Fig. 4 has been amended to change Fixed-Length Decoder 203 to Fixed-Length Encoder 203 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion in item 2 of the Office Action. It is also proposed to amend the figure by adding a line directly connecting the Memory Access Width Control Section 25 and the Frame Memory 22, generally corresponding to the line connecting the Frame Memory 106 with Access Width Control Section 110 in Figures 1 and 5. Approval of the drawing change is therefore respectfully requested.

In item 3 in the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the drawings as not showing all of the structure recited in the claims. To address the Examiner's concern, claims 2, 9 and 17 have been amended to more clearly indicate that the recited processing units are not physical elements in the apparatus, but rather are data blocks of the signal stream being processed by the invention. *See, e.g.*, specification p. 2, lns. 3-5; p. 6, lns. 16-20; and p. 13, lns. 5-8.

Similarly, claims 5 and 14 have been amended to recite that the quantizers and quantization characteristic tables are merely correlation information used by the claimed quantization control means to perform the recited quantization control function of the quantization control means.

With respect to claim 6, however, the phrase quoted in the Office Action was not found in the claim. However, language similar to that in claim 5 was found in claim 4, which has also been amended in the manner described above.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that examples of all of the structural elements recited in the claims are also illustrated in the drawings. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The specification has been objected to on the basis of the informalities set forth in item 4 of the Office Action. In response, the specification has been amended as recommended by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is therefore courteously requested.

Claims 1-16 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter.

Claim 1 has been amended to delete the recitation to “the signal.” Claims 9, 10, 11, 12 and 18 have also been amended to address the antecedent basis problems identified in the Office Action. In claim 12, the phrase “can be” has been amended to “is enabled to be” to provide positive recitation of the characteristic achieved by the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is clearly and distinctly recited in the claims, whereupon withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is courteously requested.

Applicants graciously acknowledge the Examiner’s indication that claims 1-16 are allowable upon correction of the noted formal issues. Applicant further submits, however, that claims 17-18 are also patentably distinguishable over the cited prior art, for the reasons discussed below.

Claims 17 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ohira et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,208,689.

Independent claim 17 recites the process step of “controlling [a] number of coded bits so that [the] number of coded bits is in conformity with the number of bits of an access unit of a storage means.” Such feature enables data stored in the storage means to be quickly accessed therefrom, since the coded data bits will be the same size as the number of bits of an *access unit* of the storage means and do not need to be reconfigured to access the same in the storage means.

Ohira, on the other hand, teaches that the compression rate judging section 106 determines the compression rate based on size information of the inputted image (col. 12, ln. 66 - col. 13, ln. 1; col. 13, lns. 38-44; col. 14, lns. 29-32). Ohira is silent as to a number of bits of an access unit of the disclosed frame memory 103, and hence is indifferent as to controlling the number of coded bits to correspond with the number of bits of such an access unit.

Absent a teaching of each and every feature of the invention as recited in Applicants’ claims, Ohira is incapable of anticipating the claimed invention. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

As all of claims 1-18 are allowable over the prior art of record, Applicant further submits that the present application is currently in condition for allowance, whereupon early and favorable reconsideration in this regard is courteously solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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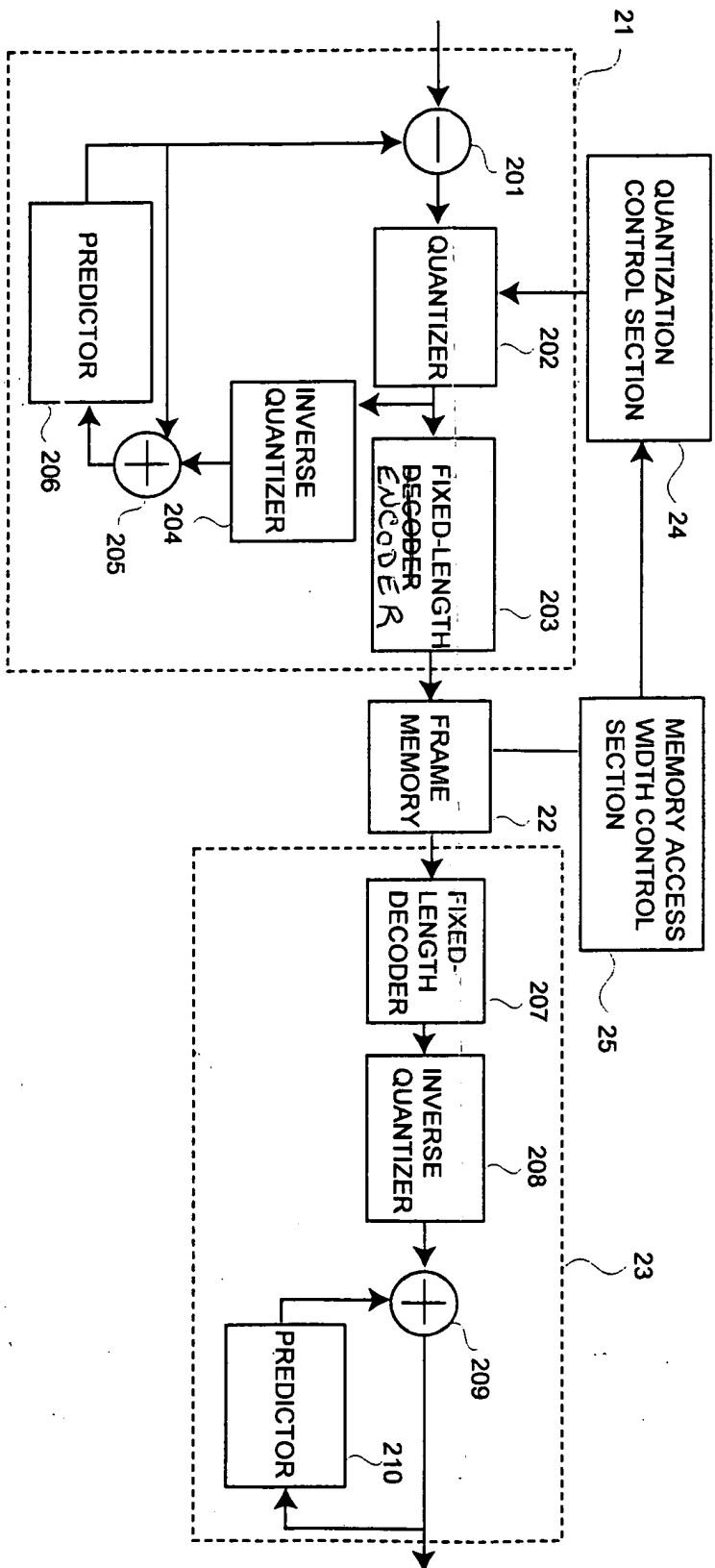
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FIG.4



Approved
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